

Message Text

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S E C R E T PARIS 3614

LIMDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EEC, NATO, PARM, MARR, FR

SUBJECT: EC NINE TREATMENT OF MBFR

VIENNA FOR MBFR DEL

REF: A. PARIS 3044 B. BONN 2177

C. PARIS 32491 (1973) EXDIS D. PARIS 3268 EXDIS

1. SUMMARY. WE REMAIN UNCLEAR WHAT FRG HOPES TO ACHIEVE BY DISCUSSING MBFR AND OTHER ARMS CONTROL SUBJECTS WITH FRANCE IN EC NINE FORUM. MOREOVER, AS WE SUGGESTED IN REFS C AND D, WE BELIEVE USG SHOULD FORMULATE ATTITUDE ON LARGER ISSUE OF EC ACTIVITY REGARDING SECURITY PROBLEMS NOW, WHILE WE HAVE CHANCE TO ACT RATHER THAN REACT. END SUMMARY.

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2. AGREEMENT BY EC NINE POLITICAL DIRECTORS TO ESTABLISH

AN EXPERTS GROUP TO CONSIDER POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS AND AGREEMENTS FOR THE POLICY OF THE NINE TO MOVE TOWARD A EUROPEAN UNION (REF B) SEEMS CONSISTENT WITH FRENCH APPROACH DESCRIBED IN PARAS 3 - 4 REF A: IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO PRECLUDE FRENCH DINING A LA CARTE AT EC DISCUSSIONS OF MBFR AND OTHER ARMS CONTROL SUBJECTS.

3. WE WOULD APPRECIATE WHATEVER FURTHER INFORMATION EMBASSY BONN (AND OTHER POSTS) MIGHT BE ABLE TO DEVELOP REGARDING GERMAN HOPE THAT THIS MOVE MIGHT LEAD FRENCH TO "SHOW THEIR HANDS AND TO ASSUME SOME CO-RESPONSIBILITY" FOR MBFR. IF BY "SHOW THEIR HANDS" FRG SEEKS CLEAR STATEMENT OF REAL FRENCH POLICY ON LIKELY EFFECT OF MBFR ON NINE'S ADVANCE TOWARD EUROPEAN UNION, WE BELIEVE FRENCH RECORD IS CRYSTAL CLEAR: FRENCH ARE TOTALLY OPPOSED TO PHASE II MBFR REDUCTIONS IN WEST BECAUSE OF A) LIKELY ACCELERATION FRENCH EXPECT SUCH REDUCTIONS TO GIVE TO TENDENCIES TOWARD DEFENSE REDUCTIONS THROUGHOUT WESTERN EUROPE; B) FEAR THAT INSPECTION/VERIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS MAY GIVE TO SOVIETS APPEARANCE (OR WORSE YET, REALITY) OF HAVING SAY IN FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF WESTERN DEFENSE; AND C) CONCERN THAT THESE TRENDS WILL FEED NEUTRALIST FORCES IN FRG AND ELSEWHERE IN WESTERN EUROPE, POSING OBVIOUS THREAT TO FUTURE OF EUROPEAN UNION (AND FRENCH SECURITY).

4. MOREOVER, WE ARE CURIOUS ABOUT MEANING FRG ATTACHES TO FRENCH "CO-RESPONSIBILITY" FOR MBFR. FRENCH HAVE MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR TO US (AND WE UNDERSTAND TO THE GERMANS) THAT THE ONLY MBFR "RESPONSIBILITY" THEY MIGHT BE WILLING TO SHARE WOULD BE FOR FAILURE OF PHASE II EFFORTS.

5. AS SEEN FROM PARIS, TOPIC OF EC NINE DISCUSSION OF MBFR (AND PERHAPS OTHER ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS) RAISES FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS THAT THE US SHOULD ADDRESS NOW. FOR EXAMPLE, IF (AS IS THE CASE) FRENCH OPPOSE MBFR PHASE II REDUCTION, ARE US GOALS FURTHERED BY EC NINE DISCUSSION OF MBFR, PARTICULARLY IF IT PROVIDES ANOTHER FORUM FOR FRENCH SNIPING AT PHASE II? WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT ON NATO CONSULTATIONS OF EC TREATMENT OF MBFR? IT SEEMS TO US THAT THESE QUESTIONS CANNOT BE ANSWERED IN ISOLATION

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FROM THE MORE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE WE POSED IN REF C. THE DANGER, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE EUROPEANS WILL MOVE IN NEW DIRECTIONS THAT FORCE US TO REACT RATHER THAN PERMITTING US TO USE IN A TIMELY FASHION THE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC TOOLS WE POSSESS TO HELP DETERMINE THE DIRECTION OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE AFFAIRS IN A WAY THAT WILL SERVE OUR CONCEPT OF THE ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP. IRWIN

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